

The Sun of Righteousness.

When first upon me broke,
Thy beams, O sun!
To a new life I woke,
New race to run.
Subdued the power of sin,
Nature has fairer been,
Thy light and glory e'en
As heaven begun.

Wide the horizon grew,
And grows to-day;
Things wonderful and new
Rise 'neath thy ray.
Self loathed and left behind,
Life lost a life to find,
To thee drawn heart and mind,
How blest my way!

Should clouds o'erhang my path,
Veiling the sky,
Tempests break forth in wrath,
Billows roll high;
Still shines thy matchless light,
Outlives the darkest night,
Brings morning calm and bright,
Is always nigh.

—REV. S. D. PHELPS, D. D., IN CHRISTIAN INQUIRER.

The Lord God of Elijah.

A SERMON PREACHED BY E. MASON IN MIAMISBURG CHURCH, JUNE 2, 1889.

Text—2 Kings 2: 12, 13, 14.

The meaning of the word Elijah is that Jehovah was God. By carrying the fact in his own name, he impressed it thoroughly upon the hearts of a people that were prone to forget him and worship other gods. This was the object of his wonderful career. He came suddenly upon them without a word about his pedigree, or his parents. His many miracles and unusual courage and fearlessness caused many of the old writers to say he was not a man but an angel in human garb. No wonder they thought this when we remember his sudden and glorious disappearance in a chariot of fire to heaven, along a new road never traveled before or since.

But then his despondency under the juniper tree, his wish to die before his time showed he was, after all, a member of the human family and not an angel.

Elijah was a great man, and great men have their moods. A little man is like a little pool by the roadside, it has no depth for a storm. It never has a spring tide or an ebb. It is always the same. So also, we notice if the pendulum of experience swings with a great swing to one side, it will go back with the same power to the other. There are some men the pendulum of whose experience never deviates more than an inch or two in their whole lives. They are always the same—never very high, never very low. They will never venture to Mount Carmel to a conflict with Baal and his four hundred and fifty priests with a king Ahab to lead them. Nor will they cry to God to take away their lives before the time. They never rise to the grandure of Carmel, and never fall to the despondency of the juniper tree.

Elijah's disappointment is the disappointment of many. He expects a great revival of religion. If he could only convince Ahab and Jezebel, then the battle was won. So in the great drama on Carmel, when the fire of heaven came at his prayer, and burned up the sacrifice and licked up the water, he was so convinced of his success, that when Ahab was going to tell his wife, Elijah was so happy that he ran twenty miles in front of the chariot. But when he heard Jezebel was as furious as ever, and threatened to kill him, he became despondent. Just like David, Moses, John the Baptist, and Luther, Just like all great men.

But the chariot of death does not always come when we want it. If Elijah had died then, he would have died under a great shadow, in the midst of a disappointment. What an end for Elijah! But there is a ripeness necessary for heaven. Some fruits are ripe in June, others in September. Many bear the storm of Autumn, and even some do not fall from the tree until the storms of winter strike them. The tree is shaken every day, and the ripest fall. It needs many storms and gleams of sunshine before the fruit is ripe.

Before Elijah was taken home he was asked to name his successor. As we read in this chapter he appointed him, and when his successor saw him going home he cried, 'My father, my father'—he was his father as a prophet, his spiritual father—the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof. He had protected the country by his prayers, and by his miracles, and by his example, so now that God was taking him. Elisha felt his insignificance and loneliness. But he had the prophet's mantle that had fallen on him, and he was going to try it, but before he tried it he cried out, 'Where is the Lord God of Israel?' He then saw God was present with him as the Jordan divided before him at the swing of the prophet's mantle.

First of all, then, let us dwell on the fact that the name, the Lord God of Elijah means something even to-day. There is a great deal in a name. When Moses started out on his great mission, he asked, 'When I come to them and they ask me thy name, what shall I say?' God said, 'Tell them I AM hath sent you'—The great I AM, the absolute, unchangeable God. Ever present, never past, always the same.

It is very remarkable that God has never associated his name but with very few of the splendid characters of the Bible. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. What does it mean when Jehovah said, 'Where are you going Abraham?' 'I don't know.' 'Is it far?' 'I cannot say.' 'Is it a great land you are going to?' Then this face would brighten up as he would answer, 'yes, for I have Jehovah's promise, and where he leadeth it is well?' So says faith all the time.

Abraham was a grand character sweeping along with the varity of a noble river. Isaac was only a canal—a home-loving, quiet man. He would not leave home even in search of a wife. But there is a need of such quiet men, meditative men, so God is the God of Isaac. Such men are not as exciting or interesting, but just as useful.

But here is poor Jacob with all his faults. What does this mean? It means that God is a God of all ordinary humanity. Jacob was a very poor character to start with. His brother seemed to be made of better stuff. Jacob was a deceiver. He deceived his old father. He deceived his uncle. He was a Jew all through. Before he came to the end, he shone out brilliantly. Communion with God and bitter trials brought him out all right. So he was the God of Jacob.

But here in our text, he is the Lord God of Elijah. What does this mean? I will try to tell you. The sentence has so many significations. It is full of rich lessons.

The Lord God of Elijah is a God that can be terribly severe against daring iniquities. It is all right to say God is love, but God will not wink at glaring, wilful, barefaced and ungrateful sins. No man dare now, more than then commit wrongs that Ahab did.

Here was Naboth's vineyard, consecrated to him because it was birthright. He dare not sell it, it was his children's, but the king wanted it. Being he could not buy it by fair means, and having set his eye on it, he went home moaning as a baby. His wife wanted to know all about his trouble. He told her, and what plans he had formed. Like a Lady Macbeth, she said, 'I will get the vineyard for thee.' Then at her bidding the owner was stoned to death, and they slew his children. As there was no one left to cry for vengeance and justice, they took possession. But God sent Elijah with his message, 'Where the dogs lick the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick thy blood, even there.' Thus God used Elijah as his messenger. The same God of Elijah lives to send his shafts of vengeance and justice on the unmerciful and greedy.

There was a pretty little farm in Wales, my own country. The father died, but the mother and the sons could carry on the farm, and make it pay. So they did. But a covetous farmer close by, who was rolling in wealth wanted to take the widow's lease. He tried the widow, then the owner, but without avail. Eventually he tried the agent. He had no interest in the matter. He was but a hireling. Here was a rich farmer after the farm, and she was but a widow. And the farm was but

as other farms for him. He was offered a good price for his service, and so the lease was sold. But the widow's heart sank as she thought she would have to leave, without cause, the home on which she had lived so happily, and where she had raised her boys. Every room was consecrated; there was the room where her husband died. There was no home in the world for her like this. One morning, the boys looking out said, 'Mother they are coming.' 'Who my boy?' 'The great agent and the farmer.' was the reply. 'Let them come, my children, it cannot be helped.' But her trust was in the Lord God of Elijah. So they came, and as they entered she took down the old Book, and said, 'Gentlemen before you read your message, let me read you a few words.' She read the history of Naboth's vineyard. Then closing the book in silence, as the tears coursed down her cheeks. She left the room. The men never delivered their message. They left the house, never to return on such an errand.

There again the Lord God of Elijah reminds us that the powers of nature and providence can be used to bring down a rebellious people to acknowledge him. The history of Israel as a nation is written carefully as a warning for all future nations and their rulers. Individuals are not always obliged to reap what they sow in this life because there is another existence. But with nations it is different. When they depart wilfully and deliberately from the path of honesty and allegiance to God, the penalty will assuredly follow their unrighteousness as night follows the setting of the sun. Look at Israel in the days of Elijah. The people have been led away from the God of their fathers. His prophets are hid away in the cave of the earth. Idol temples rear their heads through the land. It is ruled over by one of the most wicked men and detestable of kings, and he is overruled by his wife Isabel, a famous fanatical worshipper of Baal—the Bloody Mary of her day. At last the day of warning comes. Elijah in his rough Carmelite mantle stands by the palace gates and demands an audience. Without faltering he utters his message, 'As the Lord God of heaven liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be rain or dew these years, but according to my word.' They heed not the warning. The Lord God of Elijah locks up the windows of heaven, and there is death everywhere. Joy is broken up, and desolation comes as a cloud. Ahab descends his throne—look at him, but not in humility. What is he doing? He is going forth in search of a stream lest his household die. Elijah meets him. Ahab is so discouraged he is ready for anything. Elijah said, 'Wilt thou go with me to Carmel, so that we can decide who is God?' 'Yes' is the eager reply. Then when the test is over, his voice ascends with the multitude, 'The Lord he is God.' Thus the king and the nation is humbled.

Then again, the Lord God of Elijah is one that honors all who honor him. Elijah is a man of great faith. He asked for things that were never before asked for by any mortal man. He smote the waters of Jordan with his mantle and the water divided. He asked fire from heaven and it came at his word. More than all he asked God to give him back the dead, and God honored his faith. Where are the Elijahs that honor God? There may be a Charles Spurgeon here who will rise up to great influence and power; and a George Muller there, who by the power of faith maintain thousands of destitute and afflicted. It is one of the greatest experiences of the Christian age that whenever God has been honored by faith he has always kept his promise.

Once more, there are special occasions when we cannot help but exclaim, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' One of these occasions is when our leaders are taken away from us. If this happens should we fall back to despondency? Certainly not. Moses and Elijah, two great leaders of Israel left the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, but she was not left alone. Jesus was there. Yes they were left with Jesus only. Whatever we suffer in this respect, it means back to God again.

Sometimes we are surprised that our leaders are taken away in a time when they are needed most. It was remarkable that Elijah should be taken